



## Granite Cutters' International Association of America Records

1877-1978

27 boxes (19.5 linear ft.)

Call no.: MS 4

### Collection overview

Organized in Rockland, Maine in March 1877 as the Granite Cutters' National Union, the association later adopted its present name in 1905. The trade union clearly had a strong sense of their identity and purpose claiming for itself "the jurisdiction over cutting, carving, dressing, sawing, and setting all granite and hard stone on which granite cutters tools are used," and further claiming that "no other other trade, craft or calling has any right or jurisdiction over" the these activities.

Records include National Union Committee minutebooks from 1886-1954, monthly circulars, membership registers, and 100 years of the union's official publication, the Granite Cutters' Journal.

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[Labor](#)

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### Background on Granite Cutters

The Granite Cutters International Association of America, formerly named Granite Cutter's National Union, was a safe haven for workers who wanted support for the jobs they did. On January 2, 1877, the concept of an organization which provided support for the hundreds of working men began to form and on March 3, 1877, the Rockland Maine Branch was established. This would be the first of many branches across the United States that would eventually form. The main task of the Association was to discuss working conditions and pay as well as elect officers to represent the branch. For those who were injured, donations were collected from other members so that the man, who couldn't provide for himself or his family, could still survive.

In order to become a member, there was a .71 cent charge, but this fee covered the cost of supplies for the branch, furnishings for the offices and the cost of printing publications. Once a member of the Association, men were encouraged to voice their opinions or concerns themselves rather than having a representative voice it for them, and each branch President encouraged a familial communication between the members so that no one felt persecuted for raising issues that were important to an individual.

Before the Granite Cutters International Association of America was established, the granite workers worked

10-12 hour days depending on the season. The very small amounts of money that they did make went to food and boarding houses where the men stayed. This meant that there was very little money left over to save or send home to their families. The Association was able to negotiate an 8 hour work day, 6 days a week with a half work day on Sundays. The minimum wage was increased from \$2.50 in the 1890s to \$8.00 in the 1920s. In the 1940s the work week decreased to 5 days a week at \$9.00 minimum pay. Besides an increase in pay, the Association was able to introduce safety and ventilation procedures when pneumatic tools and machines were invented to protect workers from the dust, which was a health hazard.

While the introduction of machinery allowed for work production to increase, it also resulted in a sharp decline in employment. In the 1920s there were roughly 10,000 members and by 1973 there were only 3,033 members.

## **Scope of collection**

Through the years, the Granite Cutters International Association of America kept meticulous minutes of meetings as well as publishing a monthly journal. Minute books record events that took place within the union from 1886-1954; entries include but are not limited to votes, appeals, decrees and loans. Their publication, called "The Granite Cutter's Journal", was a monthly newsletter sent out to members across the country. A typical issue included: legislative news, employment opportunities for stone cutters, branch correspondence, death notices of members and their relatives, member lists, unpaid loans, and national union information. Finally, membership books (1906-1918) maintained a register of all members of the Association and the identification number associated with each man.

## Inventory

Minutes: National Union Committee minutebook	1886-1889	Box 1
Minutes: National Union Committee minutebook	1892-1896	Box 1
Minutes: National Union Committee minutebook	1896-1904	Box 2 OS
Minutes: National Union Committee minutebook	1905-1908	Box 3
Minutes: National Union Committee minutebook	1908-1913	Box 3
Minutes: National Union Committee minutebook	1921-1941	Box 4
Minutes: National Union Committee minutebook	1941-1954	Box 4
Publications: monthly circulars	1886, 1892-1913	Box 5
Publications: monthly circulars	1914-1931	Box 6
Publications: monthly circulars	1931-1949	Box 7
Publications: monthly circulars	1949-1973	Box 8
Publications: Granite Cutters Journal	1877-1883	Box 9 OS
Publications: Granite Cutters Journal	1884-1890	Box 10 OS
Publications: Granite Cutters Journal	1891-1895	Box 11 OS
Publications: Granite Cutters Journal	1896-1900	Box 12 OS
Publications: Granite Cutters Journal	1901-1905	Box 13 OS
Publications: Granite Cutters Journal	1906-1909	Box 14 OS
Publications: Granite Cutters Journal	1910-1913	Box 15
Publications: Granite Cutters Journal	1914-1917	Box 16
Publications: Granite Cutters Journal	1918-1922	Box 17
Publications: Granite Cutters Journal	1922-1925	Box 18
Publications: Granite Cutters Journal	1925-1929	Box 19
Publications: Granite Cutters Journal	1929-1931	Box 20
Publications: Granite Cutters Journal	1931-1939	Box 21
Publications: Granite Cutters Journal	1940-1949	Box 22
Publications: Granite Cutters Journal	1949-1955	Box 23
Publications: Granite Cutters Journal	1955-1961	Box 24
Publications: Granite Cutters Journal	1961-1967	Box 25
Publications: Granite Cutters Journal	1967-1978	Box 26
Account book	1932-1965	Box 27
Register of membership	1906-1911	Box OS
Register of membership	1912-1918	Box OS

## Administrative information

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### Access

The collection is open for research.

### Provenance

Acquired in 1984 from Rita MacDonald, Secretary to the President; Tile, Marble, Terrazzo, Finishers, Shopworkers, and Granite Cutters International Union, AFL-CIO.

### Processing Information

Processed by Chelsey Talbot, September 2013.

### Language:

English

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## Search terms

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### Subjects

- Labor unions--New England
- Stone-cutters--Labor unions

### Contributors

- Granite Cutters' International Association of America **[main entry]**
- Granite Cutters' International Association of America

### Genres and formats

- Minute books

### Link to similar SCUA collections

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